

Please amend this application as set forth below.

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

~~Page 7, line 22, between "exhalation." and the word "As" insert a new sentence:~~

~~When a wearer of a filtering face mask 10 exhales, exhaled air passes through the mask body 12 and exhalation valve 14. Comfort is best obtained when a high percentage of the exhaled air passes through exhalation valve 14 as opposed to the filter media of mask body 12. Exhaled air is expelled through valve 14 by having the exhaled air lift flexible flap 24 from valve seat 26. Flexible flap 24 is attached to valve seat 26 at a first portion 28 of flap 24, and the remaining circumferential edge of flexible flap 24 is free to be lifted from valve seat 26 during exhalation. The first portion 28 of the flexible flap 24 remains stationary during an exhalation and has a circumferential edge segment that may also remain stationary. As the term is used herein, "flexible" means the flap can deform or bend in the form of a self-supporting arc when secured at one end as a cantilever and viewed from a side elevation (see e.g., FIG. 5). A flap that is not self-supporting will tend to drape towards the ground at about 90 degrees from the horizontal.~~

~~Page 11, line 31, after "24" please insert --that is-- and at line 32, between "first" and "portion" insert --stationary--:~~

FIG. 5 illustrates a flexible flap **24** that is deformed by applying a uniform force to the flexible flap. Flexible flap **24** is secured at a first stationary portion **28** to a hold-down surface **46** and has for a second or free portion suspended therefrom as a cantilever beam. Surface **46** desirably is planar, and the flexible flap **24** is preferably secured to that planar surface along the whole width of portion **28**. The uniform force includes a plurality of force vectors **47** of the same magnitude, each applied at a direction normal to the curvature of the flexible flap. The resulting deformation curve can be used to define the curvature of a valve seat's seal ridge **30** to provide a flexible flap that exerts a substantially uniform force upon the seal ridge.